

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, and 9-14 are all the claims pending in the application. By this amendment, Applicant editorially amends claim 1. The amendments to claim 1 were made for reasons of precision of language and consistency, and do not narrow the literal scope of the claims and thus do not implicate an estoppel in the application of the doctrine of equivalents. Applicant has also canceled claims 5 and 8 and added new claims 9-14.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner has indicated that independent claim 1 and dependent claims 2, 4, 5, and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being unpatentable over Haffenden et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,226,189). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Haffenden does not disclose all of the elements of independent claim 1.

For example, Haffenden does not disclose at least a slope “wherein one end of the slope has an edge for abutting the card in a predetermined position.” Instead, Haffenden describes a loading region having a support surface that is sloped towards the reading region to act as a ramp, wherein pips are provided on the support surface of the loading region to prevent the card from moving from the reading position back to the loading position. (See Haffenden, Col. 4, ll. 21-23, 36-40, FIGS. 5 and 6). Because the pips in Haffenden are located on the support surface, they are not an edge at the end of the slope, as claimed in the subject application. Thus, Haffenden fails to disclose all of the elements of independent claim 1 and the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 5 and 8 have been canceled. Claims 2, 4 and 9-12 depend from claim 1 and are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1. They are also allowable because of the additional limitations set forth therein.

For example, claim 4 is dependent from claim 1 and recites “[t]he card holding structure ... wherein said internal housing which covers said card connector has a check opening.” The Examiner asserts that the “loading region” in Haffenden corresponds to both the “opening” in claim 4 and the “card insertion port” of claim 1. However, this assertion is misplaced.

The “card insertion port” of claim 1 does not correspond to the opening of claim 4. Claim 4 is dependent on claim 1, but recites “a check opening,” confirming that the “opening” of claim 4 is not the same as the “card insertion port” of claim 1. Because Haffenden only teaches a single “loading region,” the claimed “check opening” of the subject application is not present in Haffenden and the rejection is respectfully traversed.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.114(c)
U.S. Application No.: 10/671,667

Attorney Docket No.: Q77598

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

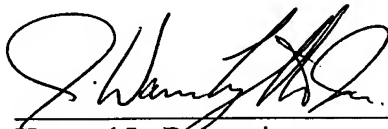
Respectfully submitted,

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